

Strategic Planning Committee Minutes

January 27, 2022

The Strategic Planning Committee met on Thursday, January 27th at 11:00 a.m. in the Athens State Ballroom. Present were Dr. Rick Barth; Ms. Pam Clark, Recorder; Dr. Joe Delap; Ms. Barbara Ferguson; Dr. Keith Ferguson; Ms. Jackie Gooch; Mr. Jeff Guenther; Ms. Beth Jenkins; Dr. Kim LaFevor; Mr. Chris Latham; Mr. Mike McCoy; Mr. Jeff Powers; Mr. Benjamin Shepard; Mr. Derrek Smith; Dr. Stephen Spencer; Dr. Timothy Thornton; Mr. Gary Valcana; Dr. Lee Vartanian; Dr. Philip Way; Dr. Catherine Wehlburg; Ms. Jennifer Wolfe; and Dr. Lionel Wright. Mr. Jamie Adams, Ms. Toni Carter, Mr. Ronnie Chronister, Dr. Mike Essary, Ms. Laura Beth Horn, Ms. Belinda Krigel, Ms. Sarah McAbee, Ms. Debra Vaughn, and Ms. Gabrielle Whitney were absent. Special guests were Mr. Richard Collie and Ms. Ashley Miller.

Dr. Way called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. There were no corrections to the November minutes and they were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Enrollment Management Plan. Dr. Way turned the meeting over to Dr. Rick Barth who presented (Handout 1). The members were divided into four groups for discussions (Handout 2).

Group 1: Offsetting the Demographic Cliff - Latham, Miller, Powers, Thornton, Vartanian, and Way

Enrollment Growth will offset the forthcoming demographic cliff expected in the latter half of the decade. What are your reactions to the Enrollment plan?

1. COVID impact in Fall 2020 enrollment will carry on with us. However, our higher new student enrollment numbers will hopefully help offset the cliff.
2. Work with high schools/dual enrollment programs to have students start at Athens State earlier.
 - Currently meeting with Wallace State to build a partnership with their dual enrolled students who completed their Associates while in high school.
3. Recruiting online programs in South Alabama area.
 - RN-BSN, CTE, and ABC/CERT programs are beneficial programs to recruit.
4. There has been a growth in education students from the Birmingham area.
 - Build off this to continue to grow the Birmingham territory.
5. Incorporate program-specific marketing with new budget year.
6. Collaborate with Dr. Delap on industry recruiting and building more learning partnerships.
7. Look into accepting more than 64 credit hours from community colleges.

Group 2: Increasing Academic Credentials – Barth, Delap, B. Ferguson, K. Ferguson, Gooch, and McCoy

1. Group members agreed that the primary measure of quality for incoming students is the GPA.
 - Look at how the merit scholarship is structured to see if there is a way to increase value for merit-based scholarship for students with a 3.5 or higher.
 - As we increase enrollment look to increase transfer GPA above a 2.0.

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January 27, 2022

- Look for more avenues to interact with the Phi Theta Kappa chapters within the community colleges.
- 2. Other suggestions for data points beyond incoming GPA.
 - Students who complete their Associate's degree before attending – in a timely fashion – will most likely be stronger students, not only entering, but graduate with better grades as a whole than students who come in without the Associate's degree.
 - Students who do not have an Associate's degree and transfer to Athens State with a large amount of hours tend to be students that struggle more.
- 3. For increasing graduating students' credentials (higher Athens State GPA) it was suggested that student success needs to be the culture of faculty and we need to move away from bell curves and other thoughts that lead to faculty thinking some students have to do poorly.
 - It was discussed that new faculty orientation should stress the need to work with and support students in a way that challenges students but also supports them.

Action Item for Follow-Up: Analyze what the increased cost to the scholarship budget would be if we increase the merit scholarship for students at a 3.5 or higher incoming GPA.

Group 3: Student Diversity – Collie, Jenkins, LaFevor, Shepard, and Spencer

1. Faculty and staff group to create a more inclusive climate.
2. Determine champions.
3. Embedding diversity into the curriculum.
4. Develop more diverse student groups.
5. Implementing a minority student visit day.
6. Career fair for at-risk high school students.

Group 4: Student Success in Academic and Employment Achievement – Guenther, Smith, Valcana, Wehlburg, Wolfe, and Wright

1. Bring more faculty in for retention discussions – create a task force to review programs that are not meeting a set campus standard.
2. Financial commitments – when data points to a need for increased support what will be the financial commitments such as investments in tutoring, TAs or other resources to improve student outcomes?
3. Explore mandatory/highly encouraged orientations for students to build more engagement and connections to campus/university.
4. Define faculty advising as “mentoring” and develop best practices across campus.

Dr. Barth thanked everyone for their time. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Pamela D. Clark

Handout 1: Enrollment Management Plan

Handout 2: Group Discussion Questions

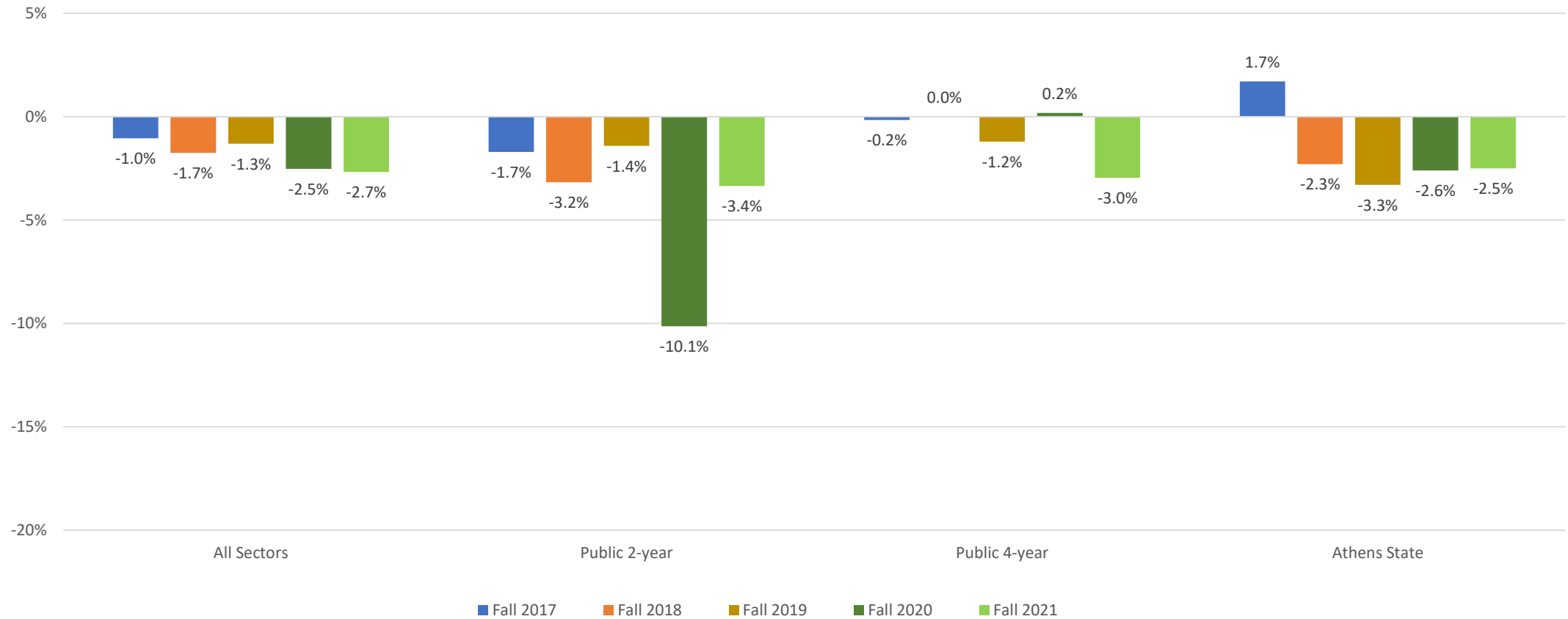


ATHENS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Enrollment Management Plan



Fall 2021 National Student Clearinghouse/Athens State



Athens State Enrollment Management Plan

- Provide a flexible framework to guide recruitment and retention efforts
- Focuses on Goal 3 of the *Horizon 2030* strategic plan
- Plan is organized around the four sub-goals of Goal 3 of Horizon 2030



Goal 3 Horizon 2030

Athens State will recruit, retain, and graduate a growing high quality, diverse and successful student body.

- The growth will offset the forthcoming demographic cliff in the later half of the decade.*
- Quality will rise with the academic credentials of incoming and graduating students.*
- Student diversity, encompassing all indicators of difference – such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, veteran status – will be reflected in Athens State’s recruitment efforts.*
- Student success will be evident in academic achievement and employment or advancement with no gaps between sub-populations of degree seeking students.*



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

- Set to happen during the period of 2025 and 2030
- Up to a 15% drop for traditional aged first-year students entering college Fall of 2025
- Athens State expected to see impact starting 2026 and continuing for several years



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

1. *Enrollment and Marketing collaborate to evaluate and strengthen the University's marketing for student recruitment purposes*

- Partner to develop a multi-channel marketing plan solely focused on student recruitment
- Develop resources for marketing initiatives within the Enrollment/Student Support division
- Work with Marketing to continue to develop the website to be recruitment focused



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

2. *Expand in-state market share*

- Continue focus on Huntsville and Athens markets
 - Overlap current visits to community colleges with program specific visits
 - Increase digital marketing presence in Athens and Huntsville metro area
 - Partner with Calhoun Community College to implement a North Alabama chapter of the Youth Leadership Development Program
 - Continue to find ways to expand learning partnerships with Alabama companies and organization
 - Explore expanding pathway programs with local community colleges
 - Continue development of “stop-out” program implemented this spring



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

2. Expand in-state market share - continued

- Expand recruiting efforts to include the Birmingham metro area
 - Include community colleges such as Jefferson State and Lawson State in territory management plan
 - Evaluate ROI of Birmingham specific scholarships and 2+2 scholarships with Jefferson State and Lawson State
 - Expand the number of scholarships Athens State offers to Youth Leadership Development program students



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

2. Expand in-state market share - continued

- Market 100% online programs to residents of Mobile and Baldwin Counties
 - Multi-channel marketing campaign targeting South Alabama
 - Explore collaborations with USA, Spring Hill, and University of Mobile promoting their undergrads starting Athens State graduate programs online
 - Plan and implement annual/semi-annual visits from Athens State faculty and staff to South Alabama colleges and universities to promote Athens State's online programs



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

3. *Increase out-of-state enrollment*

- Promote RN to BSN out-of-state
 - Digital advertising to targeted states
 - Securing RN list from states that allow them to be purchased
 - Visits to out-of-state community colleges with nursing programs within driving distance to campus
- Expand recruiting territories in surrounding states, especially to larger community colleges within driving distance
- Promote and market online programs in high population areas such as Memphis, Atlanta, and Nashville



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

4. *Increase international student enrollment*

- Develop recruiting materials for international students attending a U.S. community college
- Develop a robust international student section on the University website
- Continue to develop relationships with agents through:
 - Annual participation in ICEF Conference in Miami
 - Advertising Athens State's program with companies that promote programs to both agents and students



Offsetting the Demographic Cliff

5. Consistently monitor and analyze the work of competing institutions

- Assign staff to “secret shop” competitors
- Review recruitment, marketing, and retention initiatives of competitors

6. Create a budget work-group to focus on accurately projecting credit hour production to inform the annual budget



Increasing Academic Credentials

1. *Increase incoming transfer student GPA*

- Develop marketing campaign focused on the value of an Athens State degree
- Promote the University's Honors Program
- Expand the Excellence Scholarship Program to include a higher value for students with a 3.5 GPA or higher
- Continue expanding learning partnerships
- Set an undergraduate enrollment benchmark that when reached, will allow Athens State to increase the minimum required GPA



Increasing Academic Credentials

2. Increase academic credentials for graduating students

- Employ EAB Navigate and other tools to develop comprehensive early warning alert system
- Identify and analyze high “D/F/W” classes for adding academic support resources to those classes
- Develop support network for students that fall below a 2.5 Athens State GPA
- Identify all current, and possible, credentials associated with each academic program



Student Diversity

1. Athens State will focus on developing a campus climate focused on inclusion to support student recruitment and student success for diverse populations

- Analyze all University materials within the context of portraying a community that is committed to diversity and inclusion
- Assess what student populations are not currently being represented by a registered student organization and work to develop the organization
- Create avenues for students to provide input as it relates to their experiences with issues of inclusion and equality



Student Diversity

2. Per Horizons 2030, Increase African-American enrollment to 16% and Latinx enrollment to 3.5% of the total student population

- Continue to develop relationships with high minority student community colleges
- Develop plan for building relationships with high minority universities in order to recruit their students for graduate programs
- Continue to develop and expand programs that are pathways for minority students to come to the University
- Develop specific campus ambassador groups whose focus is to recruit African-American and Latinx students



Student Diversity

2. Per Horizons 2030, Increase African-American enrollment to 16% and Latinx enrollment to 3.5% of the total student population - continued

- Develop and implement visitation days focused on African-American students and Latinx students
- Develop Multi-Cultural focused publication that reflects the current diversity of the University



Student Success

1. Per Horizon 2030 Athens State will increase year-1 retention to 76.6%, year-2 retention to 58.6%, and year-3 retention to 35.3%

- Identify and review all current policies and procedures that impact student success
- Maximize the use of Navigate, Degree Works, and all relevant technologies that support student progression
- Develop and implement retention strategies for online students



Student Success

2. Close gaps on student success metrics between sub-populations

- Review and monitor student progression data for under-represented student populations
- Create a work-group focused on under-represented populations to develop intervention plans for supporting student success



Student Success

3. Increase employment rate of bachelor degree receiving students to attain Horizon 2030 goal of 75% will be employed in their chosen field one year after graduation

- Expand the number of career-focused registered student organizations
- Mentoring program for majors that employment is most challenging
- Expand the role of the Career Development Team in:
 - Campus Tours and Visitation Days
 - UNV 300
 - New Student Meetings followed by time with Career Development



Group Work: Discussion of Strategies

- Group 1 = Offsetting Demographic Cliff
- Group 2 = Increasing Academic Credentials
- Group 3 = Student Diversity
- Group 4 = Student Success in Academic and Employment Achievement



I. Enrollment growth will offset the forthcoming demographic cliff expected in the latter half of the decade.

1. Enrollment and Marketing collaborate to evaluate and strengthen the University's marketing for student recruitment purposes.

Strategies:

- a. Enrollment and Marketing partner to develop a multi-channel marketing plan solely focused on student recruitment aimed at interacting with prospective students across websites, digital ads, social media, direct mail, email campaigns, and texting that runs throughout the entire year and contains some program specific campaigns.
- b. Develop resources within the Division of Enrollment and Student Support Services focused on digital marketing initiatives to supplement the work being done by the Office of Marketing and Communication. This would provide the flexibility to take advantage of the marketing knowledge and experience within the enrollment division, allow recruiting personnel to move quickly when a program needs extra support for recruiting, and allow the University to take advantage of vendors that work exclusively on student recruiting initiatives and frequently contact the Office of Admissions. This is to supplement, and not replace, the work that Marketing does with Admissions.
- c. Work with Marketing to continue to develop the University's website to be recruitment focused built upon strategies to acquire, engage, and convert prospective student leads.

2. Expand In-State market share.

Strategies:

- a. Continue the focus on Huntsville and Athens markets that are seeing a population increase.
 - i. Continuation of the general campus visits to the community colleges as well as adding program specific visits for students interested in specific majors.
 - ii. Increase digital marketing presence in Athens and the Huntsville metro area.
 - iii. Partner with Calhoun to bring a Youth Leadership Development Chapter to North Alabama to raise awareness of Athens State to a younger population.
 - iv. Continue to find ways to partner with businesses and other organizations in the Huntsville area through learning partnerships.
 - v. Explore the possibility of expanding pathway programs with both Drake and Calhoun Community College.
 - vi. Continue to expand the "stop-out" program implemented spring 2022 term focusing on inviting back students with 90 credit hours or more to return for degree completion.
- b. Expand recruiting efforts in-state to include the Birmingham metro area.
 - i. Include community colleges such as Jefferson State and Lawson State Community Colleges in Athens State's territory management model.
 - ii. Evaluate the return on investment of Birmingham specific scholarships as well as 2+2 scholarship programs with Jefferson State and Lawson State.
 - iii. Continue to be a college partner with the Youth Leadership Development Program of Birmingham while increasing Athens State's scholarship awards to program participants.

- c. Begin the marketing and promotion of Athens State’s online programs to residents of South Alabama in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.
 - i. Develop a multi-channel marketing campaign for Mobile and Baldwin counties promoting all academic programs that can be completed online.
 - ii. Explore the possibility of collaborations with the University of South Alabama, University of Mobile, and Spring Hill College that promotes their undergraduate students starting an Athens State graduate program online.
 - iii. Plan and implement annual or semi-annual visits by faculty and staff to Mobile and Baldwin counties higher education institutions to promote online programs.
3. Increase out-of-state enrollment.

Strategies:

- a. Promote RN to BSN to surrounding states through:
 - i. Digital advertising.
 - ii. Securing RN list from states that provide them and implement direct mail campaigns.
 - iii. Visits to out-of-state community colleges with nursing programs within driving distance of campus particularly in Tennessee and Mississippi.
 - b. Expand recruiting territories in surrounding states, particularly larger colleges within driving distance such as Itawamba community college.
 - c. Promote and market online programs in high population areas such as Nashville, Memphis, and Atlanta.
4. Increase international student enrollment.

Strategies:

- a. Develop recruitment materials specifically for international students currently attending a U.S. community college.
 - b. As part of continuing to develop the website with a recruiting focus, include a section focused on international students that highlights quality of academic programs and faculty.
 - c. Continue to develop relationships with agents through:
 - i. Annually participating in the ICEF conference in Miami.
 - ii. Working with companies that advertise Athens State’s programs and courses to international student agents.
5. Consistently monitor and analyze the work of competing institutions.
- a. Assign staff to “secret shop” other institutions Athens State competes with for students.
 - b. Review recruiting, marketing, and retention initiative of institutions that compete for the same population of students.
6. Create a budget work-group with members from enrollment, financial affairs, and institutional research to analyze enrollment data in the development of the most accurate credit hour prediction for budgeting purposes moving forward.

II. Quality will rise with the academic credentials of incoming and graduating students.

1. Increase incoming transfer GPA for undergraduate students.

Strategies:

- a. Develop marketing materials (printed and digital) focused on the value of an Athens State degree from a cost perspective and an employment outcomes perspective promoting the advantages for high achieving community college students to transfer to Athens State versus one of the state's four year institutions.
- b. Promote the Athens State Honors program through:
 - i. Visits to community colleges with special invitations to the Phi Theta Kappa Students and advisors and any other community college populations that can be segmented by their academic success.
 - ii. Multi-channel marketing approach promoting the Honors Program and the benefits of the program.
- c. Expand Excellence Scholarship program to include an increased amount for students transferring in with a 3.5 GPA or higher.
- d. Continue to explore options for extending learning partnerships with businesses within industries that reward degree completion.
- e. Set an undergraduate enrollment benchmark that when reached, will allow Athens State to transition to a higher minimum transfer GPA for admission.

2. Increase academic credentials for graduating students.

Strategies:

- a. Employ EAB Navigate and other tools to develop a comprehensive campus-wide early alert system allowing for faculty, faculty advisors, and success coaches to be notified when a student is struggling early in the semester.
- b. Identify and analyze high "DFW" classes for adding academic support resources for those courses.
- c. Develop and implement programs and services for students who finish a semester under a 2.5 Athens State GPA focused on assisting the students raise their GPA for each of their subsequent semesters until their overall GPA is equal to or higher than a 3.00 GPA.
- d. Identify all current, and possible, credentials associated with each academic program and build avenues for students to learn of the certifications and support in completing the certifications.

III. Student diversity, encompassing all indicators of difference, will be reflected in recruitment efforts.

1. Athens State will focus on developing a campus climate focused on inclusion to support student recruitment and student success for diverse populations.

Strategies:

- a. Create a work-group with representation from students, faculty, and staff to review and analyze all university materials and website within the context of portraying a community that is committed to diversity and inclusion.
 - b. Review current registered student organizations to assess what student populations are currently not being represented by these organizations in order to guide the University's efforts to develop student organizations that promote inclusion.
 - c. Create avenues for students to be surveyed or questioned on their experiences as students as it relates to issues of inclusion. Surveying students at the end of UNV 300 or at any point during UNV 400 are possible options.
2. As stated as an outcome in Horizon 2030, increase African-American enrollment to 16% of the total student population and increase Latinx student enrollment to 3.5% of the total student population.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to develop relationships with high minority enrollment institutions such as Drake, Lawson State, and Jefferson State (Jefferson County branch) for recruiting transfer students.
- b. Develop and implement a plan for building relationships with high minority institutions to recruit their graduates into our graduate programs. Examples are Alabama A&M, Alabama State, and Oakwood University.
- c. Continue to promote and expand programs that are pathways for minority students to come into the University such as Men of Kennis and the Bonnor Foundation Leadership program.
- d. Develop specific campus ambassador groups of African-American and Latinx students to assist with recruiting students from those populations.
- e. Develop and implement a minority student visit day similar to the University's primary visitation day with the focus on inviting African-American and Latinx students.
- f. Work with marketing on developing a multi-cultural publication whose focus is to show the current racial and ethnic diversity of the campus in order to have it available to students from minority populations.

IV. Student success will be evident in academic achievement and employment or advancement with no gaps between sub-populations of degree seeking students.

1. Within the next five years, Athens State will increase year-1 retention to 76.6%, year-2 retention to 58.6%, and year-3 retention to 35.3%.

Strategies:

- a. Identify and review all current policies and practices that can impact student success. Examples of such areas include:
 - i. Availability of courses by program to allow students to finish in a timely fashion.
 - ii. Feedback mechanisms that allow students to gauge their progress early in an academic term.
 - iii. Acceptance of general education courses for new students and consistency in course equivalencies for current students.
 - iv. Academic advising consistency across programs.
 - v. Awareness of best practices as it relates to student success such as the value of taking attendance in class and implementing a graded assignment early in an academic term.
 - vi. Identify those courses creating a barrier to student progression – high D/F/W, required but not offered fall and spring, etc. Address the issues that are discovered with the courses.
 - b. Maximize the use of Navigate, Degree Works, and other relevant technologies to assist students progress through their programs and allow faculty and staff to assist students through tracking their progress toward degree.
 - c. Increase the focus of retention of online students through development and implementation of online student retention strategies.
 - i. Develop orientation program for 100% online students
 - ii. Ensure consistency of online academic support tools across all online courses
 - iii. Establish a system to identify online students exhibiting at risk behavior for intervention from the instructor, success coach, and academic advisor.
2. Close gaps on student success metrics between sub-populations.

Strategies:

- a. Review and monitor student progression data for under-represented student populations to identify where gaps exist. Populations analyzed should include:
 - i. Race/Ethnicity
 - ii. Veteran Status
 - iii. Age
 - iv. Disability
 - v. Pell Eligible
- b. Create a work-group focused on populations listed above to develop intervention plans for supporting student success in these populations. The work-group should include representatives from the Student Success Center, Financial Aid, and a faculty member that is an active faculty advisor.

3. Increase employment rate of bachelor degree receiving students to attain the Horizon 2030 goal of 75% will be employed in their chosen field one year after graduation.

Strategies:

- a. Expand the number of career-focused registered student organizations on campus through collaboration between the Director of Student Engagement and the Chairs of the Academic Departments.
- b. Expand the role of the Career Development Team in:
 - i. Campus Tours and Visitation Days
 - ii. UNV 300
 - iii. New Student Meetings – after time with Success Coach, possibility of sitting down with Career Center representative
- c. Analyze which majors are having the most difficult time securing employment after graduation and develop mentorship programs that are program specific for these majors.